

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the subject application.

Listing of Claims:

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) A nutritional additive system for pets comprising:
 - (a) separately packaged nutritional additive; and
 - (b) a package of base pet food wherein said base pet food is characterized as having been prepared at a temperature at or above 200 °F and/or a shear rate at or above 100 sec⁻¹, said package of base food containing said separately packaged nutritional additive, wherein said separately packaged nutritional additive is packaged in an air-tight container which substantially prevents the introduction of air and which allows for dispensing of the nutritional additive without substantial introduction of make-up air into said container and oxidation of said additives.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Original) The nutritional additive system of claim 1 wherein said container is a plastic container and said plastic contains UV absorbers to prevent UV exposure to said nutritional additive.

4. (Original) The nutritional additive system of claim 1 wherein said separately packaged nutritional additive includes an applicator for applying said nutritional additive to said base pet food.

5. (Original) The nutritional additive system of claim 4 wherein said separately packaged nutritional additive including said applicator further includes a dosage control device which regulates the amount of nutritional additive that may be applied to said base pet food.

6. (Original) The nutritional additive system of claim 1 wherein said separately packaged nutritional additive comprises a dry additive comprising one or more of a vitamin, and/or one or more of a mineral, and/or one or more of a herbal type additive.

7. (Original) The nutritional additive system of claim 1 wherein said separately packaged nutritional additive is in liquid form and comprises one or more of a vitamin, and/or one or more of a mineral, and/or one or more of a herbal type additive.

8. (Original) The nutritional additive system of claim 1 wherein said nutritional additive comprises vitamins selected from the group consisting of A, C, B₁₂, D, E, K, thiamine, riboflavin, panthothenic acid, niacin, biotin, pyridoxine, folic acid, choline and mixtures thereof.

9. (Original) The nutritional additive system of claim 1 wherein said nutritional additive comprises minerals selected from the group consisting of calcium, phosphorus,

potassium, sodium, chloride, magnesium, iron, copper, manganese, zinc, iodine, selenium, cobalt, molybdenum, cadmium, arsenic, silicon, vanadium, nickel, lead, tin and mixtures thereof.

10. (Original) The nutritional system of claim 1 wherein said nutritional additive comprises herbs selected from the group consisting of St. Johns Wort, Kava Kava, Echinacea, Ginkgo Biloba, Ginseng, Catsclaw, Camomile, Golden Seal and mixtures thereof.

11. (Original) The nutritional system of claim 1 wherein said base pet food contains 0.0 – 1.0 % (wt) of any vitamins, minerals and/or herbs.

12. (Original) The nutritional system of claim 11, wherein the concentration of said vitamins or minerals or herbs in said base pet food is below about 0.1 % (wt).

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) The nutritional additive system for pets of claim ~~13~~ 1, wherein said base pet food is characterized as having been prepared at a temperature range of between about 200 – 500 °F and at a shear rate of about $10^2 - 10^4$ (sec)⁻¹.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for increasing the nutritional value of a pet food, said method comprising:

(a) forming a base pet food wherein said base pet food is formed by exposure to temperatures above 200 °F and/or a shear rate at or above 100 sec⁻¹;

(b) supplying packaging for said base pet food;

(c) supplying a nutritional additive for said base pet food wherein said nutritional additive is separately packaged in an air-tight container which substantially prevents the introduction of air and which allows for dispensing of the nutritional additive without substantial introduction of make-up air into said container and oxidation of said additives; and

(d) incorporating said separately packaged nutritional additive in said packaging for said base pet food and sealing said base pet food packaging containing said separately packaged nutritional additive.

16 (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[16]]~~15 including the step of opening said sealed base pet food packaging and dispensing said nutritional additive on to said base pet food.